

S-E-C-R-E-T

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE COMMITTEE

13 October 1958

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SUGGESTION NO. 59-56: dated 13 August 1958
[REDACTED] GS-12, Case Officer
WE, FI, DE/P

A. Summary of Suggestion

In order to expedite debriefings of overseas returnees, suggester proposes a questionnaire to be filled out at the convenience of the returnee. This, according to the suggester, would probably eliminate some of the debriefings or, more important, could point out noteworthy items which the Headquarters components need to have clarified.

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B. Summary of Evaluations

On 8 September 1958, [REDACTED] Intelligence Officer, FI Staff, stated:

"1. The facts: Some statements intended to support the suggestion are not accurate. The debriefings are not 'bi- or tri-weekly'; we generally hold one per week, we may have two when we have an unusual influx of returnees, and some weeks we have none at all. On the other hand, the sessions last from one to two hours, and not 'from 40 to 60 minutes', and the attendance ranges from eight to thirty people.

"2. The purpose: The person who made the suggestion does not mention the purpose of the debriefings and he (or she) apparently does not really understand it. This purpose is to give experienced field operations officers a chance to describe their work candidly and to bring out problems and opinions which they might not want to describe in writing; at the same time, the debriefings permit headquarters officers who have been involved in the returnee's operations from this end to discuss these operations in a friendly and informal give-and-take session; the whole process is to use recent operational experience in the improvement of similar operations everywhere. We debrief only a small percentage of returning officers--those whose recent experience has been comprehensive enough to be of interest to various staff components and to branches and divisions other than the returnee's.

"3. The proposal: We doubt that the questionnaire method would serve the same purpose as the debriefings nearly so well. The report would generally be skeletal, and therefore of little use to anyone; it would lack not only the substance, but also the candor and spontaneity of a good debriefing, and it would provide no opportunity for discussion. The very presence of those who attend our debriefings is an indication of their interest; a

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"written report would only add one more type of paper to the present flow. To have the questionnaire filled out in the field would be moot undesirable; we would probably receive an official station position paper, and the stations would certainly complain of this latest reporting demand by headquarters.

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"4. Summing up: We are aware of the many administrative matters the returning officer has to attend to--finance, logistics, personnel, medical, and so on. We also want to save money, as much as the author of the proposal. But when an intelligence officer returns from the field, intelligence matters should be considered equally important with the administrative. That is why [REDACTED] (Section II) directs both the divisions and the staffs to arrange debriefings of returnees. Returning field officers are understandably gratified by headquarters interest in their work, and they probably would not get the same impression if they were greeted by a questionnaire.

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"5. Recommendation: We plan to request informal notes, based on suggestive guide lines rather than a questionnaire, from persons we would like very much to debrief but cannot because of their schedule or ours. This idea is contained in the present suggestion and therefore we think it rates an award. If the author is an administrative person, as he (or she) seems to be, the suggestion is all the more meritorious, and his effort to help the FI Staff is appreciated."

On 8 October 1958, [REDACTED] DD/P Coordinator, stated:

"This suggestion will have intangible benefit to the Agency. Utilizing the 'guide for determining awards', it is believed this would be of 'slight benefit' and between 'local and extended application'.

C. Recommendation of Executive Secretary

1. Not in line-of-duty (GS-12, Case Officer)
2. Award based on Intangible Benefits (Slight-Local, \$25-50)

D. Decision of Committee

☒ Adopted

☒ Award

☐ Letter of Appreciation

☐ Not Adopted

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